TWO PENCE

Food, Wages and Economy

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

A paper read at the Memorial Hall, Manchester. The Editor of *The Sunday Herald* has sanctioned the reprinting of certain passages that appeared in his columns.

By

EDGAR WALFORD MARTIN

Author of

"The Philosophy and Practice of Simple Diet."

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Food, Wages and Economy

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

AFTER THE WAR

A NEGLECTED INVESTMENT

THE GARDEN & ECONOMY

BREAD, BUTTER & MILK

MEAT & MEAT SUBSTITUTES

The Way to Get Well

To The Wallace "P.R." Foods Co., Ltd., Hornsey, N.—Gentlemen, as I am forwarding you an order I will take the opportunity to thank you for the benefit I have derived from your "P.R." Biscuits. An explanation of my case would take too long to write; it is one of greatly impaired digestion, non-assimilation and mal-nutrition, and when I tell you that for the last six years I have been obliged to subsist principally upon Peptonised Milk (for the first twelve months I could only take Peptogenic Milk Baby's Food) you will understand mine is no ordinary case of indigestion.

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Deal, Kent, Dec. 8, 1915.

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AFTER THE WAR.

Everywhere to-day educated people are talking of the need of economy, but, so far as one can judge, the ears of the workers are deaf to the appeal, for the reason that everywhere plenty abounds. It is true that food prices have risen considerably, but it is also true that men and women have never before in this country been able to earn such high wages as at present.

Sir Leo Chiozza Money says, 'Our people to-day are enjoying an abnormal prosperity'; an intimate knowledge of their homes reveals that, far from practicing economy, they are living in comparative luxury. Reckless of the meaning of munitions, their makers turn destruction into pleasure. In the country districts too, where a soldier's pay is so much higher than the normal rate of wage, improvident women to-day are enjoying the price of blood.

After the war, the position will be far different. Without attempting prophecy, one may say positively that, under the most favourable conditions, this bright show of prosperity will be turned into the dark reality of want and perhaps of actual hunger.

The new Income Tax is the first hint to reach the worker of the inconceivable price to be paid. When the cost of war has month after month been piling itself up at an ever increasing rate and, because there

will be no more need to make munitions, the huge return from the tax on war profits ceases, then, even if the present high standard of wages could be retained, taxation would be something to be felt. And when, at the close of the war, millions of men and women, our armies fighting abroad and our armies working here, are thrown from their present occupations; when we have a larger standing army to support, a vast number of disabled men to keep, an incalculable bill of pensions for widows and children,—then, whatever steps the Government may take for relief and however soon conditions adjust themselves, there will of necessity be a period—longer or shorter—when those who now seem to profit most must suffer most, when the eyes of those who see not to-day will be painfully opened.

A NEGLECTED INVESTMENT.

"So long as men live by bread, the far away valleys must laugh as they are covered with the gold of God."

JOHN RUSKIN.

Some workers earning high wages are making provision for a dark future, but the most secure investment, likely to yield an invaluable return in time of need, is generally overlooked.

The fear that, in this country, we might all be starving in the early days of a European war has happily not been realized, but the fact remains that no nation, and indeed no individual, is securely independent,

who does not by his own labour, and in a place accessible to his own needs, grow sufficient food to support him above starvation level. A man who, in the patch of land behind his cottage, has enough potatoes to feed his children through the winter, can meet the uncertainties of life and employment with comparative calm. It is the dread of starvation that makes men slaves to their employers. Many who sacrifice their religion, their ideals and their manhood rather than lose their posts, thus selling their birthright for a morsel of meat, might face Society with honourable defiance if they had only sufficient potatoes.

After the war, the poor man's roof will almost certainly be secure—our legislators have already curtailed the power of relentless landlords. And given enough vegetables and fruit, growing or harvested, his position during a time of distress would not be without hope.

It is generally admitted that the possession or at least the secure holding of land is the foundation of all real wealth, yet though we lack easy means of access to it, we also at present lack, as a body, the realization of its value, we lack the real earnest united determination to possess it or even to live upon it.

In spite of the difficulties—actual and imaginary—of going back to the land, it is still, considering its superiority as an investment, one of the cheapest properties

obtainable. Compare agricultural land at £40 an acre freehold with the ingenious productions of the age. For the price of a bicycle, one may buy a quarter of an acre of land—enough to provide one with food for ever. At the price of a newspaper, a bar of chocolate, or a ride on the car, one may purchase half a square yard of land, for the possession and occupation of one's family for generations.

And see, what a partner is Nature. Few servants there are who will work without coaxing, without the constant promise of reward. Yet while I sleep and while I play, she, my ever active partner, is silently, yet joyfully, in field and in garden, adding to my store.

It is but one of the evils of civilization, or the living in cities, that man's independence has been destroyed by the cutting off of his direct and natural supply of food; yet even in our small suburban gardens much might be done to restore the pride and delight of providing for our own tables. However small the land in our control, we might attempt to grow pear trees as well as roses, to beautify our porches with the crimson blossom of the kidney bean as well as the purple glory of clematis.

THE GARDEN & ECONOMY.

From the point of view of economy the smallest garden is valuable. Perhaps the most vital and necessary of all foods for

health is the salad, of radishes, mustard, cress, lettuces, cucumbers, tomatoes, onions, leeks or celery. Only he who grows these things for himself can appreciate the full pleasure of consuming them. Where the produce is fresh and can be gathered when young and tender, such additions as green peas and beans, nasturtium leaves, dandelions, and even sprouts, cauliflower and the hearts of cabbage give endless varieties. Served with some suitable dressing, as of olive or nut oil, cream or milk, lemon juice and honey, to add to its flavour, and eaten with bread and cheese to supply the necessary nourishment, salad completes a perfect meal. With such food as this, doctors and chemist's shops would soon become obsolete, for the first value of the vegetable is in its purifying organic salts, which too often are boiled out in ample water and poured away. A great saving in quantity is also effected, for a few ounces of salad is as satisfying as a pound of plashy boiled vegetables.

Outer leaves and the more tough parts of vegetables need not be thrown away, though they should not be sacrificed by quick and wasteful boiling. The casserole, or stone stew jar, for slow stewing in the oven, is far superior to every other utensil for cooking vegetables of all kinds, requiring only a little fat or half an inch of water at the bottom. Any remaining fluid should be converted into sauce that the valuable vegetable salts may not be lost.

Dr. Chalmers Watson, writing last June in the 'Scotsman,' remarks that the waste of vegetable peelings in an ordinary household probably amounts nearly to one shilling's worth of food per week, and that calculated at this rate for every house in the Kingdom, the national loss equals twenty million pounds sterling a year.

It is, I think, probable that salads and conservatively cooked vegetables would form a more satisfactory basis for our meals than bread, and that the potato is one of the staves of life. In any case, being a home grown product cheaper than bread, we should do well to increase its proportion in our future meals.

Dr. Haig, in his pamphlet, 'Freedom from Uric Acid and How to Obtain It,' says: 'I am careful to eat potato (which contains a considerable amount of alkali) at least three times a day, the potato at breakfast being the most important, though not the most nourishing, item of the meal. I am one of those who do not think it a mere chance that the lowest cancer death rate in the United Kingdom is to be found in association with the largest consumption of potatoes in some of the country districts of Ireland. Cancer is associated with retention of uric acid in the body, and next to warmth and natural activity, there is nothing which is more likely to prevent this retention than the humble potato.'

BREAD, BUTTER & MILK.

Few children prefer bread and butter to baked potatoes with crisp skins: as a first course for tea they are unrivalled. The conventional *tea* with thin white bread and butter and cake is, indeed, a very extravagant meal, yielding little nourishment in relation to its cost, requiring to be supplemented a few hours later by a rest-disturbing repast. So many adults, especially women, are slaves to this poisonous tea-drinking that its abolition seems hopeless, but shall we not protect our children from its early ravages? A good supper, with vegetables, porridge or milk pudding, is a splendid substitute for the child's tea and comparatively cheap.

Care should be taken to avoid *the fatal danger of Vegetarianism*, namely, the provision of soft, wet dishes, needing little mastication. Toast, twice-baked bread, or, better, crisp unsweetened wholemeal or other biscuits prepared without the use of chemicals or adulterants should be taken with all such foods, not only saving the children's teeth but bringing all the benefits of good digestion. †

There are few homes in which bread is not a more expensive item than in the days before the war, but in our own cottage, having, among other economies, substituted vegetables for part of our bread, we have found it possible to live at the same rate per head as before.

† "The Healthy Life"—3d. monthly of Booksellers and Food Reform Stores—deals regularly with sensible food reform, including better ways in children's diet.

Another economy in bread, sometimes forced upon inhabitants of inaccessible cottages, results from the rare visits of the baker's cart. Socialists point to the waste of delivery by six bakers in one street, but Individualists might observe the wasteful *daily* delivery when once or twice a week would be enough. Not only should we free men and horses for more productive work, but we should help to liberate women from the petty tyranny of domestic trifles, if the frequent ringing of a frantic bell did not break the household harmony so often. Stale bread is economical and is far easier to digest. Alas, for the unfortunate mother who says that her children will not eat it!

As we substitute vegetables for bread, so we may substitute bread for cake—*not white bread*, not necessarily always plain wholemeal, but one and another of the many varieties now produced. The possibilities of variety in the kinds and preparation of breads are as yet untried. Toast forms a beneficial change or, where time and patience are limited, slices of bread baked in the oven make a very fair substitute, invaluable with porridge and soft foods generally, as an aid to digestion. Pulled bread, that is, bread torn into the size of walnuts and baked, is another variety of toast that strongly appeals to the child.

In many households, it would be possible to reduce the consumption of butter, but fat is such a valuable part of our food that a far

wiser plan is the use of the cheaper nut-butters and margarines. Nut-butters made in several varieties, as cocoa-nut, walnut, almond or cashew, at a shilling to fourteen pence a pound, are preferred by some in flavour to the best dairy butter, and *certain* varieties of margarine—even as low in price as sixpence—made from pure ingredients, as nuts and milk, are quite pleasant to the taste. Speaking generally, these butter substitutes are considerably higher in nutritive value than butter itself, some writers giving the protein value of nut-butter at seventeen times as great as the value of that from the dairy.

Another very economical food, about which middle-class people have a kind of back-door feeling, is separated milk. For the use of skim-milk suggests poverty and, in this age of shame, nothing is so shameful as to be poor or, rather, to appear to be poor. If men and women were half so ashamed of poverty of mind and poverty of soul as they are of poverty of purse, reform in food and in other departments of life would not be so far away. Let us not be ashamed of separated milk. As we might expect, it lacks fat, but in protein it is equal or superior to the whole milk.

In the making of rice puddings, the thinness of such milk can be easily overcome by long baking. Bake a milk pudding in a very slow oven for from four to six hours, and you have an extremely creamy result—reminiscent of the days when you afforded

new laid eggs. To a helpless acquaintance, whose son of sixteen months positively refuses separated milk, this should be a valuable hint.

MEAT & MEAT SUBSTITUTES.

Let us now compare meat and vegetarian dietaries from the point of view of economy. Beginners in Vegetarianism sometimes find that the new diet costs more than the old, and that it takes them longer to prepare. "Ought this to be so?" is perhaps a natural question. The reply is as difficult as if one should ask, "What does it cost and how long does it take to visit America?"

At home, where we keep a careful record of these things, we can testify that the cost of our vegetarian diet is but a little over half of our former mixed diet, and that the new meals take less time to prepare. But not to waste money, time, and life in meals has been our constant effort: indeed, in adopting the diet, we hoped to liberate at least one woman from the sacrifice of heart and mind to continual domestic slavery.

My own personal experience suggests even greater economies. Once, being for several days alone in the house, I resorted to the cookery book for help. Selecting porridge, and making as large a pot as possible, I supplied at one effort all cooked meals for the period, spending thus in money, time and energy on my diet about

a tenth part of that commonly occupied, taking at least an equal amount of nourishment, and a smaller supply of disease, weakness, and bad temper, for which an elaborate, highly spiced and very mixed diet is responsible.

So far as time is concerned, one can spend as much or as little as one chooses on the preparation of vegetarian meals; but, certainly, if one desires to live simply, the elimination of meat makes the matter very much easier, for meat must necessarily be cooked, to transform its unpleasant condition, while many of its substitutes are acceptable in their natural states.

A similar reply might be given to the question of the cost: that fifteen shillings a week per head can easily be spent on a vegetarian dietary, yet, with careful living, four shillings a week is enough; that many have lived on less and lived well.

As I shall shortly show, meat is always an expensive article of diet—extraordinarily so at the present time—and it is never possible, while taking meat meals daily, to live economically. But, while a vegetarian diet is not necessarily cheap, as fruit and nuts tend to be dear, there are always available from the vegetable kingdom nourishing foods, as potatoes, rice and oats, that make extremely cheap living quite easy.

As an illustration of luxury in Vegetarianism, I find that bananas when skinned cost about eight pence a pound, yet those

who would not dream of spending eight pence a pound for pears, commonly buy bananas, while cheaper foods, like dates, that are about twice as nourishing, are neglected. Again, pea nuts and chestnuts are economical foods, but the shells of brazil nuts are heavy, and their kernels—at two and four pence a pound—are beyond the reach of the poor.

The one strong argument for the use of meat is that our grandfathers ate it; but those who so much love the past should go further and further back and, free from the limitations of city life, copy the simple diet of their earliest nut-eating parents.

Allowing that meat is not a necessity—which any interested person can prove for himself—let us look at some substitutes for it, comparing their prices in terms of nourishment.

For 1lb of Beef at One Shilling,
we will substitute,
1lb of Shelled Monkey or Pea Nuts at Four Pence,
1lb of Oatmeal at Three Pence,
½lb of Cheese at Five Pence,—
a total cost of one shilling as before.

Nuts are a splendid source of highly concentrated food, rich in protein and fat. Eaten after a *Christmas* dinner, they are as indigestible as beef steaks under similar circumstances, but eaten as part of our meals with bread and butter, they are, if thoroughly masticated, a most sustaining food.

Pea nuts are improved in taste by baking in the oven, when the red skins under the shells can be easily removed. Those who have time they desire to spend in further cooking, may, with an inexpensive mill, grind up their nuts for baked dishes, and with bread crumbs, potatoes and other ingredients, make Nut Roasts, Nut Fritters, and the like, to please the most fastidious palates.

Even supposing our pound of beef is solid meat, without gristle or bone, the pound of nuts alone will be superior to it in nourishment: for our first four pence we have already more food.

While our beef, analysed, is shown to be more than half water, our pound of oats—like our pound of nuts—is nearly all solid food. One ounce of oatmeal, with water added, makes three quarters of a pint of porridge—a fair serving as a first course for one person. So that a family of sixteen, who could scarcely divide the pound of beef, could satisfy themselves with three pence spent in oats.

Thus we provide many meals from the vegetable kingdom for little more than half the cost of a pound of beef.

By spending the remaining five pence on cheese—a product which would disappear if we ceased to breed cattle for food—we shall have nourishment without waste; it

will, as we say, go very much further, yielding, in half a pound, more nutriment than in the whole pound of beef.

Peas, beans and lentils are universally famous for their high nutritive value; indeed, in theory, one could live upon them at an extremely low cost; but the protein in them is difficult to assimilate even for those whose systems they suit. The dried varieties should not be taken every day, and never in large quantities, but in soups, roasts and vegetable pies, with other ingredients, they can often be served.

Economical buying is a factor that favours the vegetarian; for neither in the pantry nor in the human body will meat keep sweet, while a pot of potatoes, a peck of onions, or half a cwt. of dates may often be stored for the winter.

* * * * *

It would be hard to plead for economy in money or in food, if such saving meant the sacrifice of essentials, the loss of health or happiness. But as simple diet means more health and more freedom, so all economy in material things leaves time and energy for the mental and the spiritual. The world sees the value of money, of clothes and of houses, but women and men of simple needs have treasure in heaven—have property in the morning bath, in fresh air, and in the setting of the Sun.

MONKS' PATH
NEAR BIRMINGHAM

March, 1916.

WARNING

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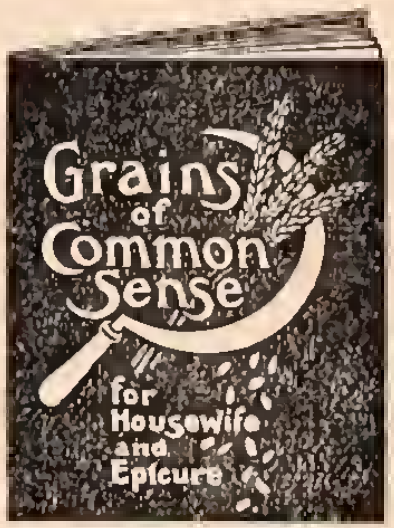

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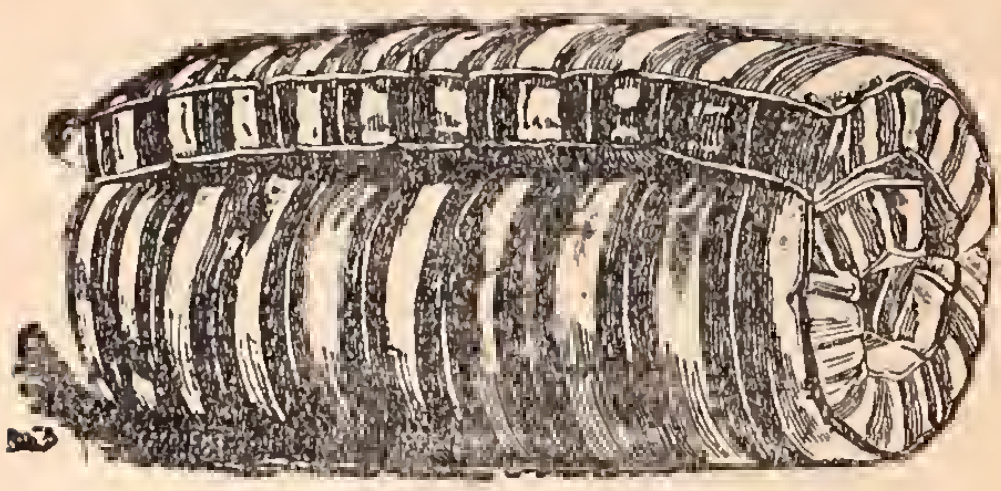

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